Looking for Rhyme and Prosodic Patterning in *Richard III*

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LOOKING FOR RHYME
AND PROSODIC PATTERNING
IN RICHARD III

"The man that has not music in his soul"

The Merchant of Venice (5.1.83)

Ever since Sackville and Norton's Gorboduc (1561)¹ and the decisive breakthrough with Marlowe's thundering and "mighty line" (Ben Jonson's often quoted phrase), blank verse, which was to triumph with Shakespeare and Milton, had become the official and undisputed medium of the English drama, but never really to the exclusion of other forms of discourse which are still found in Elizabethan and Shakespearian dramatic language in various proportions from play to play.

It is well known that the choice of the medium (prose or verse, rhymed and unrhymed) depends on genre, social distinctions, situations, types of discourse, tones and moods. Verse for history, tragedy and romance, for the Court, for poetic and heroic climaxes; prose for comedy for the people and low-life characters (peasants, citizens, murderers, clowns),² prose also as the language of madness, confusion and chaos, replacing verse, for instance in the tragedies, to symbolise the mental and moral disintegration of the hero.³

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1. The first appearance of blank verse in poetry is usually dated to Surrey's translation of parts of the Aeneid (1541). Gorboduc marks the first instance of blank verse in drama but it is still mixed with much rhymed verse.

2. Early plays, until about 1596, are massively in verse, some of them, entirely, like 1 Henry VI, 3 Henry VI, King John, Richard II. Note the heavy use of prose in Henry V, a very epic play but with long comic passages which announce the great comedies. For the history plays, I have used the Arden edition. For the other plays, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (London: Oxford UP, 1954).

3. In Hamlet, Ophelia, gone mad, combines prose and irregular rhyme in her songs (4.5).
But it is also a truth universally acknowledged that in Shakespeare's
dramatic language there is nothing strict or systematic in these distinc-
tions. To take but two examples from history plays, King Henry V speaks
prose in Act 4 (scenes 1 and 7) with soldiers and more curiously with the
King of France and Katherine in Act 5 scene 2. And so do in 2 Henry VI,
Suffolk and the Queen (the latter very briefly, though) in presence of the
petitioners (1.3.19-28).

Similarly the development of Shakespeare's dramatic language does
not follow a straight line. No one, I suppose, would dispute the fact that
the general progression is from constraint to freedom with a gradual
disuse of rhymed verse, an increasing flexibility of blank verse and a
development of tragic prose. Thus rhymed verse is sometimes said to
characterise Shakespeare's early plays, notwithstanding the strong
influence of Marlowe's blank verse. But the "test of rhyme" in the dating
of Shakespeare's plays is far from reliable. For instance, the lavish use of
rhyme in Midsummer Night's Dream and Richard II (both posterior to
Richard III) does not make them the earliest plays in the Shakespearian
canon. The fairy setting of the former and the poetic mood of the latter
may explain this extensive use of rhyme but probably Shakespeare had
already begun to free himself from Marlowe's influence. Even more
strikingly, Macbeth, one of the last great tragedies (and the shortest play
after Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest) is heavily rhymed.4

Rhyme in drama

Rhymed verse was usually considered as an impediment to the
colloquial quality sought in dialogue. However, despite the famous
controversy that it gave rise to in sixteenth-century England, rhyme never
really disappeared from stage language.5 Even if it was sometimes

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4. Plays where rhyme is abundant include, for instance, The Comedy of Errors,
Romeo and Juliet, Midsummer Night's Dream (over 42% of the lines) and Love's Labour's
Lost (62%). Incidentally, it is sometimes said that there is no rhyme in The Winter's Tale,
one of Shakespeare's last plays, but the assertion must be qualified: see the true rhymes in
2.3.82-83: "any/he"; 3.2.71-72: "freely/conspiracy"; 4.3.47-48: "any thing/coming"; 140-
42: "you/do" plus eye rhyme "so"; 557-58: "princess/Lentos"; 569-70: "father/Sir" (and
572: "deliver"); 583-84: "who/you"; 5.1.213-14: "sorry/beauty" (and 216: "enemy"); 5.3.
53-54: "brother/power"; 60-62: "fancy/be/already."

5. The rhyme controversy started with the publication of The Scholemaster (1570).
Following the revival of classical learning and the taste for classical metres, rhyme was
felt to be too vernacular and even vulgar (Campion, for instance in his Observations in the
Art of English Poesie [1602] which drew a reply from Daniel in Defence of Rhyme
[1603]). However, we see major poets of the glorious tradition, like Spenser and Sidney,
make an extensive use of rhyme and even a contestant like Puttenham (Arte of English
parodied (including by Shakespeare), it maintained its presence in various forms, more or less integrated into the action, especially in sonnets (sometimes in disguised form when part of a dialogue), songs, doggerel verse, occasionally in prologues, choruses or epilogues, in plays within the plays an in gnomic poetry. But it also gradually adapted to spoken communication and the stage, establishing certain conventions. Thus couplet rhyme was fairly regularly used to mark off the boundaries of a speech or the ends of scenes and acts (remembering however that such divisions were foreign to contemporary drama), shifts in subject-matter within a single speech, cues for the next speaker (speech-link rhymes). The use of such "theatrical rhymes" was not incompatible with the other poetic, architectural or rhetorical functions of rhyme: embellishment, line-patterning, emphasis and amplification.

But rhyme was not confined to marginal places and ancillary offices, it sometimes invaded dialogue, as Kyd and Marlowe, themselves, testify. Indeed, if Marlowe played an important part in liberating drama from the bondage of rhyme, consecrating blank verse as its ruling medium, he continued to use scattered rhymes in his plays and welcomed it for special effects, which suggests a further remark: if Shakespeare's preference for blank verse is often ascribed to Marlowe's influence, the same argument may be used for his preservation of rhyme, and this until even

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6. A quick look at Edward II, contemporary with Richard III, shows that Marlowe continued to make extensive use of couplet and spaced rhymes, though perhaps less frequently than Shakespeare: 1.1.15-18, 52-53, 63-64, 70-71 ("die/majesty"); 1.4.139-40, 142-43, 176-77, 333-34 (and 331), 346-47, 363-64, 369-70, 421-22; 2.1.36-37 ("hand/end," and before "band" [33]), 73-74 (and "we" [77]); 2.2.25, 27, 41-42 ("cry/Britainy"), 185-86, 242-43; 2.3.2, 22, 2.4.24-25, 27, 29, 59-60; 2.5.11-12; 3.2.16, 18-19, 39-41, 111-12 ("hence/hands"), 140-41; 3.3.54-55, 60-61; 4.2.81-82; 4.3.45-46; 4.6.14, 16-17, 25-27, 37-38, 94-95, 110-11; 5.1.25-26, 33-34, 54-55, 67, 69, 98-99 ("mine/crime": equivalence of nasals); 5.2.6-7 ("fear/ears"), 11, 13, 15-16, 69-71; 5.3.15-16, 23-24; 5.6.11-12, 60, 62, 64-65 (sounding the last syllable of Mortimer, for his last appearance, preceded by the leonine rhyme in 58: "traitor/murderer," and concluded by further echoes in "suffer" and "traitor" [I.67]). Edition: Marlowe, Edward II, 1594, ed. W. Moelwyn Merchant (1967; London: Black, "The New Mermaids," 1990).

For sustained rhyming in Kyd, see Spanish Tragedy 2.1-40; 2.2.5-6, 10-22; 2.4.24-49; 2.5.24-33, 36-41, 47-66; 2.6.1-10 (mostly couplet rhymes).
the later plays, as *Macbeth* shows with a high percentage of rhymed lines (over 11%) for one of the shortest plays in the canon.

In the tetralogies, the two most remarkable examples of the use of rhyme are *1 Henry VI* (about 10%), which precedes *Richard III*, and *Richard II* (about 20%), posterior to it by seven years or so. *1 Henry VI* is characterised in particular by the sudden irruption of sustained rhyme in Act 4 from the beginning of scene 5 (line 16) to the very end of scene 7, devoted to the two Talbots in a heroic then elegiac context as both father and son die on the field of battle (more about it below). As for *Richard II*, the omnipresence of rhyme may be due to the poetic atmosphere that surrounds the aesthete-king and pervades the play.

*Richard III* has a relatively high number of rhymes though, like most history plays, with the exception of *2 Henry VI* and *Henry V*, it contains no songs or doggerel verse. With an average of about 5.7%, by my own count, it comes next in rank in the first tetralogy to *1 Henry VI*, and before *3 Henry VI* to which it is a sequel.

This objective fact is enough to justify an enquiry into Shakespeare's use of rhyme in the play. It is true that *Richard III* is the longest play in the first tetralogy (3 596 lines) and the second longest in the canon after *Hamlet*, but its length does not explain everything. *Richard III* is a highly formal, rhetorical, ritualistic, and well-structured play, four qualities which are usually related with rhyme whose role in the patterning of poetic language is as essential as that of metre. Moreover, it was composed in 1592-1593, when all the London theatres were closed, at a time when Shakespeare was writing two famous rhymed poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*.

**Shakespeare's practice of rhyme**

Like most poets, Shakespeare makes use of all types of rhyme both in non dramatic and dramatic verse:

7. For Shakespeare's practice of rhyme I have taken most of my clues from both his lyrical sonnets (*Venus and Adonis, Rape of Lucrece*) and dramatic verse, with a special attention to the history plays. I have checked and compared with contemporary playwrights like Kyd and Marlowe. I have also looked into Frederic W. Ness's *The Use of Rhyme in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale UP, "Archon Books," 1969) but, although it has provided sometimes useful information, I have used this study only sparingly and with great caution for it is especially devoted to couplet rhymes and it seems to me that there are some inconsistencies, a few erroneous statements and omissions. For instance, the author claims that the "death/wrath" rhyme of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (5.4.126-27) "has no parallel in Shakespeare" (122) but there are
with itself), feminine or double rhyme (two syllables); visual (eye-rhyme), polyptotons and derived rhymes (including the so called "easy rhymes" like "me/thee," "me/she," or "myself/thyself," or like verbal endings, in particular "-eth" and even more frequently the "-ing" form, which recalls the homoeoteleuton – or similar case-endings – of ancient classical poetry which was unrhymed), semantic rhymes (lexical partners filling rhyme positions and playing an active part in the patterning of verse, in addition to more specific stylistic effects) and much less frequently pararhymes (initial and final consonants but different vowel in between).

**Identical rhymes** may rhyme singulars and plurals as in "conqueror/conquerors" *(1 Henry VI 5.5.73-4).*

**Eye rhymes** sometimes produce apparently strange pairs, like "way/victory" *(3 Henry VI 5.115-16, scene-ending rhyme)* or "key/may" *(Merchant of Venice 2.7.59-60)*, as if one letter were enough for the Elizabethans to create the illusion of rhyme.

A rhyme like "resolve/love" *(1 Henry VI 5.5.75-76)*, taking its place in a series of three couplets rounding off a speech, seems to suggest that it also admitted the inversion of letters. Hence another rhyme like "lord/world," recurrent in *The Winter's Tale*, for instance *(1.2.253-54; 2.1.78-79; 5.1.12-13)*.

Also, the final "e" was disregarded: *Venus and Adonis*: 55, 57: "fast/haste"; 422, 424: "chat/gate"; "grapes/mishaps"; 445, 447: "taste/last"; 848, 850: "parasites/wits"; or any intruding letter (vowel or consonant) as in: 91, 93: "heat/get"; "guest/feast" *(449-50: compare with "there and appear")*; and in *Richard II*: "death/earth" *(3.2.152-53)*.

A good example of pararhyme is provided by *3 Henry VI* 1.3.49-50: "blade/blood" followed by alliteration on "both" *(end of the scene)*.

A more subtle one is found in *Henry V* (1599, posterior to *Richard III*), concluding the King's famous oration to the English troops before the battle against France: "charge/Saint George": it is based on a double equivalence: between the voiceless and voiced affricates (/tʃ/ and /dʒ/) and the long vowels (perhaps in affected pronunciation).

The poet also makes a frequent use of **consecutive rhymes** (triplets, quatrains, or even longer schemes), true or identical, which play various functions that can only be examined in context.

two occurrences in *Richard III* *(1.3.267-68; 2.1.106-07).* Altogether I found many more rhymes in *Richard III* than he did, even when comparing only couplet rhymes.

8. Ness reminds us of the fact that "the /s/ did not destroy the rhyme for the Elizabethan" *(Ness 135).*
As for the phonological nature of rhymes, here are a few other guidelines and examples of Shakespeare's practice, largely consonant with the contemporary one:

- equivalence voiced/voiceless: "is/this" (Sonnet 72); "is/amiss" (Sonnet 59).

- equivalence of nasals /m, n/: "times/designs" (Richard I 4.4.416-17).

- the final /e/ is discounted: "past/waste" (Sonnet 30), "waist/chaste" (Rape of Lucrece 5-6).

- the /s/ does not prevent rhyming: again/friends (Richard III 3.7.245-46).

- echoes between /ent/ and /ont/ (probably more than an eye rhyme): "invent/excellent" (Sonnet 38); "lent/banishment" (Richard II 1.3.146-47); "intent/Parliament" (3 Henry VI 2.1.117-18).

- /ens/ and /ins/: "hence/prince" (3 Henry VI 5.5.79-80).

- /ai/ and /i/: "die/memory" (Sonnet 1); "eye/alchemy" (Sonnet 33).

- "joy" and "eye" rhyme (Hamlet 1.2.10), and "boys/eyes" in Richard III (4.4.231-32).

- "deserts-parts" (Sonnet 17); "desert/part" (Sonnet 49); "desert/impart" (Sonnet 72).

- /o/ and /a/: "alone/gone" (Sonnet 4), also an eye rhyme.

- /ou/ and /u/: "loan/one" (Sonnet 6) and "one/alone," a cliché rhyme in the sonnets (see Sonnets 36, 42, 105).

- consonantal rhymes: "sentinell/kill" (Venus and Adonis 650-52); "possessed/least" (Sonnet 29); so that the series "grow'st/departest, bestow'st/convertest" (Sonnet 11) could also be considered as based on the same consonantal rhyme (/st/) and a contrast between single and double rhymes (we remembering that "/art/" and "/ert/" rhymed at the time, as said above).

- past participles in "-ed" may be fully pronounced and therefore provide rhymes like "spread/buried" (Sonnet 25) or "dead/buried" (Sonnet 31) or "coloured/dead" (1 Henry VI 4.2.37-38). So "dead/butchered" is a true (distant) rhyme in Richard III (1.2.64-67).

- "there" can rhyme with "fear" (1 Henry VI 5.2.16-17) or "bear(e)."

- "thence" can rhyme with "intelligence" (visual rhyme) but also with "citizens."

- "them" or "then" can rhyme with "again," and therefore "Amen."
"death" and "approcheth" (1 Henry VI 4.2.17-18); and "death/wrath" (Richard III, see below). Gorboduc has a speech-end triplet with "wrath/death/earth" (1.1.65-67).

A few additional remarks would be in order concerning similitudes and differences in the use and perception of rhyme in dramatic and non-dramatic verse.

In the latter where true rhymes are expected, notwithstanding certain liberties, a slight phonological alteration may produce a different set of rhymes. On the contrary in blank verse, the ear detects similitudes more readily than differences, so that the impression of rhyme is greatly extended to lines which normally would not count as rhymed.

Moreover in dramatic verse, rhymes often receive amplification through various types of internal or external (terminal) echoing (anticipated or prolonged rhymes, assonances).

There is no reason why the analysis of rhymes in drama should be limited to strict couplet rhymes. The other two types of non-dramatic rhymed verse (enclosed and alternate rhymes, abab, abba) and even other more elaborate schemes involving more than four lines, are also found in stage verse either in single speeches (same speaker) or in shared patterns. Also, in blank verse, the principle of more or less distant rhyming (acknowledged in both alternate and enclosed rhymes) can be extended to include echoes at more than two line intervals, preceding or following a canonical rhyme scheme. Anticipated or prolonged (or delayed) rhymes are essential in long poems to preserve a certain unity of tone, as the practice of many poets of the great tradition testifies. As regards the scene and act ending rhymes, it should be noticed that the rhymed lines are sometimes followed by an extra unrhymed one signalling a change of subject or action, entrances or exits, with recurrent formulas like "here X comes," or "Let's go . . ." more often "Away . . . ," occasionally included in the final couplet.

A last remark concerning the use of rhyme in asides. The distinction between asides and soliloquies is generally clear enough. Normally an aside is a very short speech spoken in an undertone in presence of other characters who are not supposed to hear him; it often has a direct bearing on the last spoken words, either as ironic comment, sarcasm, curse or threat; more rarely it takes the form of a "dialogue within the dialogue" as

9. Even Milton, who denounced the use of rhyme (see preface to Paradise Lost, on "The Verse"), uses it all the time, as I have tried to show elsewhere, perhaps taking his clue from the Elizabethan dramatists.
in the bandied asides between Gloucester and the Cardinal in *2 Henry VI* (2.1.37-55).

A soliloquy is different in situation and degree: it is spoken when the character is alone (*solus*) on stage and it is usually longer. But like the aside, it is spoken for the audience mostly to inform them of the speaker's feelings. Also the soliloquy is more serious in purpose than the aside and broader in scope conveying for instance philosophical reflections or information on other characters and/or the development of events. Thus 4.2.42-45 is an aside and 60-65, a soliloquy, and so is Buckingham's speech in 4.2.199-222. But how about this single line from Richard concluding the wooing scene with Elizabeth: "Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman" (4.4.431)?

One would expect asides, traditionally brief, intimate and rather colloquial in tone, to be rather averse to rhyme and most of the time, this is true. However there is, in Elizabethan dramatic verse, a tradition of rhymed asides, mostly couplet rhymes, either shared (for comic or sarcastic echoes) or not, or internal rhymes for single-line asides.

**Rhyme and patterning in Richard III**

A short remark on prose first. In *Richard III*, the only passage in prose occurs in the scene of Clarence's murder and it is inconsistent. At first, as a sign of respect for Richard, the murderers speak verse (1.3.342-52), just like the Keeper and Clarence in the next scene, in keeping with the convention according to which the main character usually imposes his medium, though the reverse case is sometimes possible. But once alone, they speak prose (98-151), to revert to verse again with Clarence (151-260), and it is rather surprising to notice that they keep to this medium after his death, even concluding the scene on a couplet ("away/stay"). Why?

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10. Sometimes carefully patterned as in lines 267-68, with its internal rhyme on "fee/me" and quasi rhyme with "say/slain."

11. Perhaps there has been an aesthetic conflict between two conventions: Shakespeare wanted a rhymed scene-end and the verse speeches that precede prepare for it. Seven years later, in *Henry V*, he will be bolder and will end a scene entirely in prose with a rhymed couplet: "ten/Englishmen" (3.7).
A survey of rhyme in Richard III

True rhymes (see Annexe)

I find 204 successive rhymed lines (shared and unshared), including couplets and other acknowledged stanzaic forms, that is an approximate average of 5.7%, which places Richard III among the most rhymed history plays. The impression is even stronger when one takes into account internal rhymes and more or less distant rhyming which, in many cases, provide further echoes and amplify the effects of the basic patterns.

Quite a few passages exhibit consecutive rhymes (occasionally mixing types), a sure sign of Shakespeare's lingering taste for the device. I will give only a few examples for the moment but more will be found in further analyses below.12

Consecutive rhymes

- 1.1.55-59: "G/G/be/G/he," a quintet mixing identical and true rhymes and framed by "dreams" and "these" (assonance). The pattern takes up the first couplet rhyme of the play ("G/be" [39-40]), both emphasising through repetition the main theme of the play, identity and its main principle of composition: deceiving reflections in the troubled mirror of England's history.

- 1.2.75-80: Richard wooing Anne: an original pattern with another mirroring effect with the series: "woman/leave/myself" (Richard) and "man/leave-self," where Anne is answering tit for tat.

- 1.3.142-48: "world/world/is/days/enemies/king/king" (shared): a triplet framed by two identical rhymes.


A good example of how Shakespeare exploits true rhymes (alternate in /r/), slant ones (hence/queens) polyptotons, and assonance ("queen/-beat") to link replies.

- 4.2.119-22: "service/this/gone/on" (Buckingham complaining about Richard's ingratitude. Also a scene end).

- 5.3.311-14: "awe/law/pell-mell/hell!" (speech-end rhyming; Richard's last verbal flourish before his defeat).

12. Richard II has many and perhaps more conspicuous ones: 1.1.41-46, 154-59, 166-71, 188-95.
Act and scene-ending rhymes

1.1. "reigns/gains"; 2. "glass/pass"; 3. no, unless we accept "straight/lord" as a consonantal (weak) rhyme; 4. "Away/stay."

2.1. no; 2. no; 3. no; 4. no; (prosaic scene-ending cue: "Go; I'll conduct you. . .").

3. 1. no; 2. no. 3. no; 4. "head/dead"; 5. no; 6. "(not) naught/thought"; 7. "again/friends" (imperfect rhyme).

4.1. "well/farewell"; 2. An aside on a quatrain: "service/this; gone/on"; 3. six rhyming lines mixing visual and true rhymes: "delay/beggary; wing/king; shield/field"; 4. no; 5. "hand/mind" (imperfect, even as a visual rhyme, for there is no vocalic base), followed by "Farewell."

5.1. "shame/blame"; 2. "wings/kings" (heroic tone and proverbial); 3. Imperfect: "dragons/helms" (imperfect) 4. no; 5. A quatrain: "increase/peace; again/Amen."

All acts but 2 end on rhyme, some of them imperfect (at least by modern standards), and the play closes on a quatrain. Out of 25 scenes, 14 end on rhymes.

In the use of theatrical rhyme in such strategic positions, Richard III conforms rather strictly to the convention of act end rhyme, even if some of the rhymes are rather approximate. More in any case than in the other three plays of the same tetralogy: 1 Henry VI and 3 Henry VI have three act end rhymes, and quite originally 2 Henry VI has only one (the final act).13

Comparatively, in Henry V (a posterior play written in 1599) all the acts and almost all of the scenes have rhymed endings, and so do, incidentally, the six prologues and choruses, the first two ending on quatrains and the final one being a perfect Shakespearian sonnet.14

The rhetoric of rhyme in the play: looking for Richard and Margaret

Since it is impossible to present an exhaustive analysis of rhyming in this play and also to avoid a fragmentary and tedious presentation, the analysis of rhyme rhetoric in the play will be conducted around two main characters, Margaret and Richard, and the last part will be devoted to a few other remarkable examples of rhyme patterning.

13. 1 Henry VI ends on a semantic rhyme: "King/realm."
14. This looks (sounds, rather) like a return (a regression?) to rhyme, on the threshold of the great tragedies. Be that as it may, it shows, like Macbeth and Pericles, that Shakespeare preserved a life-long interest in the device (apart, of course from the sonnets).
Margaret

Queen Margaret, widow of King Henry VI, only appears in Acts 1 and 4 but she makes a strong impression. Probably because she is the closest theatrical role to Richard's, both as choric character and also as an embodiment of revenge and Nemesis ("I am hungry for revenge" [4.4.61]), with something of his outspokenness, energy and gusto.

Like him, she is both a central and marginal figure, simultaneously on the stage and in the wings, watching people and commenting, often sarcastically, on action and characters, before bursting forward and breaking into the conversation, often to condemn, curse or abuse, snarl or bite, sometimes to lament. Like Richard, she uses asides, but unlike him, she only has one short soliloquy (4.4.1-7). In the latter, she seems to comment on her theatrical role: "Here in these confines slyly have I lurk'd / To watch the waning of mine enemies," but it is also one of the playwright's dramatic tricks to give the illusion of presence for a character who is absent most of the time, with this proviso: the acts and scenes where she appears are also the longest in the play.15

The best examples of double-playing are in Act 1 scene 3 (Elizabeth and Richard's quarrel) and in 4.4. (the so-called wailing queens scene). Both display the same shift from asides to open speech, with similar and different effects.

In Act 1, Margaret's seven asides are levelled alternately or simultaneously at Elizabeth and Richard. They express her feelings but they also provide information (1.3.118-20). Most of them are unrhymed, but verbal echoes in the last two (143, and 155, which sounds like an unrealised stichomythia) prepare for her shift to open speech as she can no longer contain her indignation. It bursts out into a series of identical rhymes ("me/me/me" [158-60]), as if to assert her presence, identity and rank before the usurping Queen, prolonged by a possible imperfect rhyme in "subjects/rebels."

4.4. opens on a short soliloquy smacking of Richard's usual grim jubilation, followed by three two-line asides before Margaret claims her own share in misfortune and joins the wailing chorus.

The staging is both similar to and different from the first passage. The three asides are rhymed: two full couplet rhymes ("right/night" [15-16]; "Plantagenet/debt" [20-21]) and one split couplet with Elizabeth ("done/

15. Act 1 is the longest with 1 058 lines, followed by Act 4, 841, as against 416 for 2, 822 for 3 and 459 for 5. Act 1 scene 3 has 355 lines and 4.4, 538.
son" [24-25]) which serves again as a transition for direct participation in open speech.

As for Margaret's longer speeches, they illustrate a fondness for ploce (or random verbal repetition), identical rhymes (successive or delayed) and more especially symploce. As we know, the symploce combines anaphora and epiphora, that is the repetition of a word at the beginning of two successive lines and of another one at the end. It may be loosely applied to the perfect or approximate repetition of identical sounds. For Margaret: see 1.3.199-200, 250-51; 4.4.40-46, 63-64, 95-96, 103-04, 122-23 (on phonological echoes), to which should be added: 1.2.62-63 (Anne); 2.2.74-79 (collective lamentation); 4.1.91-93 (Duchess); 4.4.410-11 (Richard).

16. As we know, the symploce combines anaphora and epiphora, that is the repetition of a word at the beginning of two successive lines and of another one at the end. It may be loosely applied to the perfect or approximate repetition of identical sounds. For Margaret: see 1.3.199-200, 250-51; 4.4.40-46, 63-64, 95-96, 103-04, 122-23 (on phonological echoes), to which should be added: 1.2.62-63 (Anne); 2.2.74-79 (collective lamentation); 4.1.91-93 (Duchess); 4.4.410-11 (Richard).

17. See in 1.3.241-46, how Margaret relies on images and alliteration to express content and hatred, with the labio-dental and alveolar fricatives (/f, v, s/) and the plosives (/b, p, k/) which combine their effect in another curse scene.
Buckingham’s last reply, launches into some kind of verbal juggling where the arabesques make us hear the voice of the poet rather than the voices of the characters.

_Buck._ Peace, peace, for shame, if not for charity

_Marg._ ............charity............shame............me

Uncharitably.............me.........................

...shamefully.......................

...charity.............outrage......................shame

...............shame............................rage

In the short space of five lines, Margaret uses an internal rhyme ("charity/me") in the first line, doubled by the repetition of "me" in the next, plus an anaphora based on two ironical derived rhymes on the key words of the exchange ("Uncharitably/shamefully") leading to a chiasmus, since line 276 brings back the root words in reverse order ("charity . . . shame"), to finish with an elaborate interlacing on the same, bringing into play parallelisms and symmetries, verbal repetition and assonance generating other chiasmuses. All this requires disentangling:

- 277: epanalepsis with "charity" and "shame," poles apart in the line, embedding the leonine assonance: "outrage/shame."
- 278: another leonine assonance on the same diphthong ("shame/rage") but the words recur in reverse order.
- taking the two lines jointly, the same effect of inversion is repeated, as the half-line assonance ("outrage/shame") is inverted at the end of lines ("shame/rage").

In other words chiasmus, or the figure of inversion par excellence, fulfils here two functions: it expresses Margaret’s tragic conversion ("rage" replaces "charity" in her final words) and helps her to turn the tables against her enemies.

Then after a last short speech (and final curse), Margaret leaves the stage not to return until Act 4 scene 4. In the meantime, Richard has been crowned.

4.4.35-58: Margaret joins the chorus of wailing queens. Starting in a quiet tone with a quatrain of alternate rhymes ("reverend/seigniory/hand/society" [35-38]) she proceeds with a forceful pair of symlopes which triggers a retort in the same form from the Duchess, which she again echoes, the exchange generating an impressive series of seven

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18. Compare the rhyme "reverend/hand" with "hand/end" at 4.4.72-73.
composed identical rhymes ("kill'd him") which blur the vision like so many reflections in a broken mirror.

**4.4.61-78**: a revenge speech which reveals two main patterns of terminal elaboration.

- lines 63-70: a combination of true and identical rhymes, assonance, exploiting parallelism and symmetry, the two main principles of poetic composition.

Two embedded sets of triple rhyme, in chiasmic order: couplet on identical rhymes ("Edward") with a perfect echo at a two-line interval, then an inverted pattern with "they . . . play/Grey," followed by the reverse rhyme "Grey/graves."

Horizontal patterning also plays its part, especially at the beginning of the passage with internal rhyming on identical words: "me" (61-62, echoing the Duchess [60]), "dead" (63-64, relayed by 66), in the middle of the symplece: "Thy . . . Edward" (63-64) which echoes those of 40-45, like a distant rumbling.

- 73-77: "hand/end, pray, hence, pray, dead": the initial couplet of slant rhymes (and perhaps a true rhyme in Shakespeare's time) is followed by a spaced identical rhyme ("pray . . . pray") separated by "hence" and followed by "dead" which both assonate with the two rhymes (/æ/ and /eɪ/). Now, if "hand" and "end" do rhyme, lines 73-74 form a particularly interesting pattern:

> "And send ......................at hand, at hand
>
> Ensues............piteous and unpited.................end"

suggesting a sort of phonological symplece based on perfect and approximate homophony, the second line including a derived rhyme

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19. In the analysis of figures of sound, it is safer, to avoid subjectivity, to take into account only lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and stressed syllables. Echoes involving function words (like "and," here) or unstressed syllables ("Ensues") can
("piteous/unpitied"), the couplet closing quite judiciously on the key word "end," which also forms with "dead" (78) a semantic rhyme.

With her final long speech (4.4.82-115) where rhetoric triumphs, Margaret leaves the stage with a flourish, combining the power of images (first part, down to 91) with the energy of rhetorical patterning. A passage which is almost a text book of rhyming devices and figures of sound.

The main structuring devices are anaphora and alliteration but terminal rhyme plays also its part. The tone is given in the first two lines with the anaphora "I call'd thee / I call'd thee." It then triggers a series of rhetorical questions (92-96, "who" replacing "where" in 94), reminiscent of the ubi sunt motif of elegiac poetry, emphatically concluded by sympleoce and identical rhyme (95-96) and a second series (98-104) piling up antitheses this time, contrasting Elizabeth's former and present states.

The two series which echo each other repeatedly (the successive "For she . . ." paralleling the "Where be . . ." of 95-96) end both on rhyme ("thee/thee" [95-96] and "one/none" [103-04]) and rhyme also closes the speech on a perfect one: "mischance/France" (a recurring rhyme in Shakespeare).

Alliteration structures the whole passage:
- the first part with its catalogue of images: the fricatives and plosives (/f, t, p/) in the first couplet, the /h/ in 86, the nasal /m/ in 87, the plosive /b/ at the end of 90, the anathema ending on an assonance "queen . . . scene," an epanalepsis whose specular effect identifies ironically the queen with a histrion.
- the set of rhetorical questions with /b/, /p/, /s/, and note how line 94 embeds two alliterative schemes ("sues . . . says . . . save" and "God/Queen") with one leonine assonance ("kneels . . . Queen") and a reverse rhyme: "says . . . save."
- the antithetical series: especially line 98 ("wife . . . widow") and 101-02 with its heavy concentration of echoes in /k/: "Queen/caitiff/crown'd/care/scorn'd/scorn'd."

Apart from alliteration, identical, derived and true rhymes combine to produce a new example of subtle interlacing of both sound and sense.

100: anaphoric repetition with "one" (beginning of clauses) and derived rhyme "sued/sues" in leonine position, both with a slight irregularity in the positions (an allowed license in verse patterning).

be considered as auxiliary musical effects, a sort of "grace notes" to the main melody, especially if the pattern is neat as in our example.
102: combines internal rhyming ("me") with identical rhyme on "scorn'd," but with opposition active/passive.

103: another leonine rhyme, this time on lexical partners ("all/one") with another derived rhyme, "feared/fearing," repeating the active/passive contrast in reverse order but with past and present participles.

104: based on two semantic rhymes: "commanding/obey'd" (another two opposed participles reversing again the previous pattern) and "all/none" in leonine position.

The last two lines form an original symploce, where the epistrophe is not based on an identical rhyme but on a true rhyme with a final antithesis: "one/none." Moreover the half lines form an identical rhyme on "all." 20

Obviously Margaret seems as skilled in rhetoric as in curses (to allude to line 116) as the coda (118-23) to her farewell speech testifies, unfolding another series of antitheses (this time for the benefit of Elizabeth), decked with lexical contrasts, derived and true rhymes ("nights/days; dead/living; were/is; sweeter/fouler; bad/worse"), alliterations at line ends ("woe/were/worse") and an ultimate rhyme ("worse/curse") forming with the anaphoric homoeoteleuton ("Bettering/Revolving") another approximate symploce:

Marg. Bettering..............................worse
Revolving.................................curse

Apparently, this device, along with rhyme in general, is catching for the last exchange between Elizabeth and Margaret reflects again this pattern with a shared symploce:

Eliz. My words..............................thine
Marg. Thy woes..............................mine

The symploce is less imperfect than it seems since the anaphora "words" and "woes" is probably an intended rhyme, both visually and orally (after all, "w...s"/"w...s" is at least a pararhyme). The fact that the two words recur in rhyming position in the next exchange seems to confirm this, where the pair starts in fact a series of consecutive rhymes mixing semantic and true rhymes ("woes/joy"s," a near rhyme; "joy/
miseries," an acknowledged rhyme, "impart/heart," a perfect one), while the Duchess, to round up the scene, adds her own contribution with the derived rhyme "smother/smother'd," an ironic distortion of "mother," in this context of perverted family relationships.

But the exchange is interrupted by the sound of trumpets and drums, the song of grief, with its antiphonal effects, being replaced and displaced by the triumphant instrumental music, greeting the solemn entrance of Richard III in majesty... to whom we now turn.

Richard's speeches

Richard, the hero and leading character in the play speaks almost a third of the lines (1 101 out of 3 596).

Richard's part displays a great variety of discursive types corresponding to the many roles he assumes. We see him plotting, threatening, squabbling, condemning, complaining, arguing, gloating and jeering, wooing, cursing, exulting, exhorting and at the very end of the play fearing and lamenting. He speaks in public or in petto through asides, and of course in soliloquies addressed to the audience. He plays an active part in stichomythic exchanges, either playful or aggressive.

Although an arch-villain, Richard, being a noble, does not have a single line of prose, even with Clarence's murderers (1.3). However his language often sounds more pedestrian and colloquial than the other characters': "leave the world for me to bustle in" (1.1.152), "I run before my horse to market" (1.2.160), "cold as over-shoes in snow" (5.3.327), for instance.

Asides

Richard has six asides (Margaret has more, see above). Unsurprisingly enough, they are mostly sarcastic and cynical, like his soliloquies.

- 1.3.318-19.
- 2.2.109: commenting on his mother's greeting.
- 3.1.79: sarcastic prophecy commenting on the young Prince's wisdom, containing an internal rhyme: "young/long."
- 3.1.82-83: "Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity / I moralize two meanings in one word."

This completes Richard's self-portrait and the literary and cultural allusion to Christian medieval plays makes of it the most direct address to the audience.
After Richard's crowning, asides and brief soliloquies seem to multiply as the new elected King is caught in a vicious circle of plotting, murdering and... fearing.

- 4.2.28-31, 42-45 (expressing distrust of Buckingham and intention to kill him).

None of Richard's asides is rhymed, and the same remark applies to the short soliloquy of 4.3.36-43: Richard is summing up the list of his crimes and deciding on the last move: marry Elizabeth's daughter.

This is the last address to the audience, apart from the brief line commenting on Elizabeth after the wooing (4.4.431).

Rhyme is of course more obtrusive in longer soliloquies: 4.2.60-65 displays two terminal rhymes ("daughter/her" and the couplet "in/sin") and a certain number of more or less perceptible internal rhymes (oral or visual): "Murder/brothers/her; gain/in; sin/sin; pity/eye."

But Buckingham's soliloquy, a few lines further down, is even more clearly patterned, proposing a perfect quatrain of alternate rhymes in a scene-end speech: "service/thus/gone/on" (119-22).

Short speeches
- 1.1.63-70: two couplet rhymes: "she/extremity" and "there/Tower."
- 1.1.76-83: echoing Clarence's last word ("delivery"), with an opening couplet ("deity/liberty"); the rhyme stretches to the end of the speech, with "way" (visual rhyme), "livery," and "monarchy," itself echoed by Brakenbury with "me" (84).
- 1.1.88-96: takes up the previous rhyme with "Brakenbury/say" (88-89), goes on with two semantic ones: "King/Queen," and "foot/tongue."
- 1.1.98-100: similarly, Richard echoes Brakenbury's last word (split couplet) with "fellow" and concludes on a true rhyme "one/alone."
- 1.1.106-08: another shared couplet with Clarence: "obey," followed by a quasi rhyme "King/in" (107-08).
- 1.1.129-31: spaced rhyme: "too/you," echoed by Hastings's "mew'd."
- 1.1.138-42: one couplet: "person/upon."
- 1.2.220-21: "you" (identical rhyme), concluding the wooing scene with Anne.
- 1.3.42-53: one couplet: "courtesy/enemy" (49-50).
- 1.3.306-08: a spaced one: "mother/her."
- 2.2.101-06: one couplet: "mercy/knee."
- 2.2.141-44: one couplet: "Ludlow/go."
- 3.7.103-07: an opening couplet: "apology/me."
- 3.7.110-12: a spaced one: "offence/ignorance."
- 3.7.245-46: scene-end couplet: "again/friends."
- 4.3.52-57: a series of three couplets in heroic context for scene-end: "delay/beggary; wing/king; shield/field."
- 5.3.11-18: one speech end couplet: "delay/day" (17-18).
- 5.3.217-23: a spaced one: "me . . . me." (221-22).
- 5.3.283-88: couplet: "day/army," then "me."

It is interesting to observe that, even in short speeches, rhyme (of any sort) is often present, and not only in speech-end or scene-end lines. The couplets (shared or not) dominate and are variously distributed at the beginning, middle or end of the longest short speeches.

The most remarkable example occurs in a heroic context (4.3.52-57), in keeping with a certain tradition (but see below for further observation).

### Long speeches: (around 15 lines and more)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1-41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1st self-portrait</td>
<td>Soliloquy</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.145-62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>plotting</td>
<td>Soliloquy</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.155-87</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>wooing Anne</td>
<td>Soliloquy</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.232-68</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>gloss on the scene</td>
<td>Soliloquy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.324-38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2nd self-portrait</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5.71-93</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>5.3.178-207</td>
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<td>5.3.315-42</td>
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</table>
The longest scenes are Richard's first self-portrait, the two wooing scenes, Richard's election as king, his nightmare and the oration to his army.

The speeches of Act 1 are essentially choric soliloquies providing information on the character himself and the plot. Afterwards, Richard's role as a choric character tends to decrease as if his growing isolation gradually cut him off from the audience, a flimsy link being supplied by a few scattered asides or short soliloquies.


In this opening speech (the second longest one) which may serve as prologue, rhyme is rather scarce: there is only one true rhyme at the end, the speech-end couplet "G"/be" followed by an unrhymed cue line, a spaced identical rhyme on "days" (28, 31) and two slant rhymes: "steeds/adversaries" (10-11), "just/treacherous" (36-37) to which may be added, at the beginning, the vertical internal rhyme "winter/summer" (1-2). The music of lines 5-8 where the fricative /s/ in medial position ("brows, arms, alarums, marches") and terminal ("wreaths/monuments/meetings/measures"), supported by the nasals, lends to the quatrain a dancing rhythm quite in keeping with the sense.

1.1. 145-62 (soliloquy after line 144): Richard is plotting his marriage with Anne.

The speech is not very long but contains more rhymes than the preceding one. In addition to the final couplet ("reigns/gains") which is also a scene-end rhyme, we find a triplet: "Clarence/arguments/intent" (147-49), a couplet with "daughter/father" (153-54), prolonged by the spaced identical rhyme in 156 ("father" . . . "father") and another spaced rhyme ("amends/intent") echoing the first couplet of lines 148-49.

It is of course tempting to relate sound and sense or situation and say for instance that rhyming in this passage reflects the patterning of Richard's thoughts and future. But this may be pure conjecture.

1.2. 155-87 (dialogue): Richard wooing Anne and stooping to conquer.

As Richard is playing here the role of the Petrarchan lover, one could expect a fairly generous use of rhymes. This is not really the case.

We do find true rhymes, one internal ("beauty/fee" [173]) and most of them in conventional places as speech-pause or speech-opening markers for each of the three parts of this triptych: "enemy/fee," prolonged by the
assonance "speak" (171, 172-73), "thee/knee" (180, 182), echoed in "Henry/me" (183-85), prolonged by "me" (187), to which one could perhaps add the quasi rhyme "wept/made" (160-61).

However, the ends of lines are especially characterised by a sprinkling of identical, derived or semantic rhymes on two themes: death (154, 156, 164) and weeping (157-60, 165, 168, 170). The latter dominates as the ruthless Richard, who never cried once in his life, as he himself boasts, is anxious to pose now as a man of feeling suddenly transformed by Anne's beauty. This is for him the occasion to exploit a much worn conceit of Petrarchan love poetry (which the oxymoron "living death" [156] seems to evoke): the murderous power of the Lady's eyes.

This both original and conventional wooing scene is fraught with irony for it reveals Richard's egocentrism: indeed he who could not shed a tear even for his own father's death is now weeping on his own fate. A subtle form of irony too for after all songs of complaint and lamentation also belong to the stock-in-trade of Petrarchan sonneteering.

Intensive rhyming would not have been appropriate for a mock love scene, in which deceit, hypocrisy and cynicism lead the game, a passage more dramatic and rhetoric than poetic, reaching a climax with Richard's offering of his life, a masterpiece of Machiavellian strategy.

So nothing really distinguishes this long passage from the others.

1.2.232-68 (choric soliloquy): Richard commenting on his easy conquest of Anne.

This long passage opens on the famous couplet ("Was ever . . . woo'd? / Was ever . . . won?") , which is almost perfect duplication and closes on a rhymed quatrain: "grave/love/glass/pass,"21 decked with internal rhyme ("turn/return"). In between we find two true rhymes: "eyes/by" (237-38, the /s/ being discounted), "prince/since" (244-45) and a delayed one: "me/moiety" (251, 253).

Altogether a well-patterned speech in which rhyme remains unobtrusive, despite the final quatrain which is also a tribute paid to convention (rhymed scene endings).

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21. The rhyme "grave/love" is attested by Ness 119.

Nothing special except for the distant true rhymes "me/villainy" (332, 336) and "evil/devil" (335, 338) and the initial imperfect assonance "brawl/abroach."

3.5.71-93 (dialogue) plotting with Buckingham.

The situation calls for no special elaboration in this passage where Richard gives instructions to his accomplice. Just one true rhyme, perhaps accidental: "children/citizen" (74-75).

3.7.140-72 (dialogue): Richard feigns to refuse the crown.

This is the public speech of a future king and we would normally expect elaboration, and we get it although Richard, stooping a second time the better to conquer, is playing low profile in a self-degrading portrait of himself (a variant of the rhetorical device known as humiliatio or tapinosis). But the patterning owes more to diction (vocabulary and syntax) than to rhyming.

As the occasion demands, the diction is elevated and dignified: long sentences (Richard's style is usually curt), choice vocabulary and latinisms ("depart in silence, reproof, reprove, incur, Definitively, desert, unmeritable, revenue and due"), inversions (141, 153-54 with enjambment), balanced phrasing (142, 143-149, 150-51 generating a consonantal rhyme on two lexical partners, "first" and "last"), compound adjective ("Tongue-tied" [144]), images ("golden yoke" [145, 161, 163] and the rather gaudy horticultural metaphor of 166-67).

Rhyming does peep its head here and there but does not wear the crown: there is only one couplet "sovereignty/me" (145-46) then a few distant echoes with "me" (148), "sea" (161), "me" (164), "majesty" (168), "me" (170) in a rather long passage.

However, like Richard, rhyming is hiding its virtues: first of all, "sovereignty/me," the only rhyme in the passage, sums up in a nutshell Richard's epic quest, identifying, through homophony, the royal function and the usurper (what sounds alike must be alike, one of the laws of poetic language), reverberating the message through the chain of echoes (apart from the intruder "sea" which cannot however drown the effect) in which "majesty" replaces "sovereignty" at the end (168). What Richard's words seem to deny, Richard's rhyme proclaims.

No wonder if the same collocation recurs in Richard's next reply: "me/majesty" (203-04).
If this reading holds good, this passage is a good example of a subtle exploitation of rhyme to support the sense, ironically deconstructing Richard's argument while summing up his intimate designs.

The coda to this speech (3.7.222-35) calls for no special remark, except that it reintroduces the dignified diction with latinisms ("penetrable, entreaties, sequel, imposition, enforcement, acquittance"), balanced clauses (225, 226, 228, 230, with another compound adjective), supported at line ends by assonance ("load/reproach"), distant rhyme ("me/see") prolonged by "this," perhaps an inverted imperfect rhyme (/si:/ and /is/) based on the equivalence of long and short.

4.4. 291-336 and 397-417 (dialogue): Richard goes a-wooing again with Lady Elizabeth (for her daughter).

This is Richard's second wooing scene but the situation is quite different from the first one (with Anne) and the wooing is much longer. However Richard's two speeches devoted to it total about the same number of lines as in the first case, with the difference that they are both dialogues whereas in the first scene, the second speech was a long soliloquy addressed to the audience.

The content of the speech is also very different: the rhetoric of persuasion does not appeal so much to Elizabeth's vanity as to her reason. The very first line gives the tone, which is essentially argumentative: "Look what is done cannot be now amended." (291)

Richard then proceeds to play the perfect sophist, proposing a sort of commercial transaction supposed to settle all accounts (324).

Rhyming has no place in such an intellectual and rationalising speech, apart from distant rhymes on key words like "daughter" and "mother" (295, 298, 300) and a quasi rhyme with "interest/happiness" (323-24). Priority is given to semantic rhymes: "sons/daughter" (294-95); "groans/sorrow, youth/age, King/Queen" (303-08) and the suasio is capped by the rather bombastic image of a Roman triumph. But Elizabeth is not as easily "won" as Anne and Richard's feat of eloquence triggers a stichomythic exchange so that Richard needs a second feat to achieve his goal: 397-417.

Changing tactics, he waxes lyrical, protesting his sincerity and calling upon his head divine justice and presumably death, thus resorting to the tactics which proved successful with Anne. Richard is an accomplished orator: having first appealed vainly to reason (logos) he now appeals to feelings and emotions (pathos) mixing emotional outcries with forceful arguments in balanced form (410-11, a symploce and 414-15, with leon-
ine derived rhymes) and flattery (405, 412), bringing his plea to a close with a couplet rhyme: "times/designs."

This is too much for Elizabeth who finally surrenders.

**5.3.178-207:** Richard wakes from his nightmare.

This is a far cry from both the character that we have seen and the voice that we have heard so far. Richard is now tragically alone, the pageant of ghosts that just precedes, functioning as a sort of prefiguration of his destitution through death: all the characters that were around him have gathered ritually at his bed-head, the better to leave him one by one in total solitude, to join with Richmond, like a coronation ceremony in reverse.

For the first time, Richard discovers fear, if not remorse. The passage is highly emotional and the diction broken by exclamations and questions. He who spoke but lately in rapid assertive statements now discovers the full force of two other modalities of language which he had little used before. Ironically the king is now subject to himself, chained like a captive by his own conscience and the language reflects the ineluctability of his destiny through the felicitous use of *concatenatio* (194-96: "tongues . . . And every tongue . . . tale, / And every tale . . .").

The main theme of the passage being the vicious circle of self-imprisonment, no wonder that "me" and its grammatical derivation "myself," and "I," recur obsessively in strategic positions within and at the end of lines. And no wonder either that this is the passage where rhyme shines most, ironically at the very moment when Richard's sun is about to set.

"Myself" has by far the largest number of occurrences (12), naturally enough for it is the lexeme in the group that expresses egocentrism most explicitly. "Me," comes next with three occurrences, then "I," with two, in line 184 ("I and I," leaving aside of course the other accidental uses of the pronoun as well as the "me" of 196). The majority of them occur at line ends, sometimes strongly concentrated:

- a couplet rhyme with "by" and "I" (183-84, prolonged by the formidable question "why?", an ironical intruder between "I am (why) myself" (in a vertical reading), a question which will for ever remain unanswered.

- a triplet for" myself" in 189-91, anticipated by line 187.

- two couplets on "me" and "myself" in 201-04.
Furthermore, Richard's despair and vehemence (197-200) generate a series of epizeuxes ("Perjury, perjury . . . Murder . . . murder . . . Guilty, guilty") arranged in progressive order leading to the rhyme position (miming perhaps the witnesses' progress to the bar) and a quatrain including three identical rhymes on "degree" (like a triple curse, again). Moreover, it is not without interest to observe that the quatrain is followed by the couplet on "me," thus producing the longest pattern of identical rhyming in the play. Also, the triplet on "degree" draws attention to the main theme in the Tudor myth (if there is such a thing), later on immortalised by Ulysses's famous speech in *Troilus and Cressida* (1.3.101-31), reminding us that Richard's guilt was essentially a breach of degree.

Finally, the rhyme "guilty/me" could be seen as an ironic echo of the "royal" rhyme (not a "rhyme royal" of course) of the coronation scene ("sovereignty/me" and "me/majesty"). It would probably have been wiser for him to let "me" rhyme with "me," as in 201-02. 22

5.3.315-42 (dialogue): Richard's oration to his army and Richmond's.

Richard's oration follows hard upon Richmond's (238-71, 34 lines) and the proximity, the similarity of situation and some verbal echoes invite comparison or rather contrast. They succeed (and reflect) the two passages describing the King's and Richmond's moods on the eve of battle: restlessness and irritability for Richard, calm, self-confidence and trust in God for Richmond (who can pray, contrary to Richard 109-18). Indeed the two speeches differ greatly in content and style. Dignity, restraint, balance and controlled energy in the former; as against rage, invective, colloquial speech ("milksop . . . overshoes in snow . . . rags . . . rats . . . bastard . . . Bobb'd and thump'd . . .") in the latter.

Richmond's oration (six lines longer than Richard's) is essentially structured by an introduction opposing God's cause and power to Richard's, followed by a portrait of the tyrant, then by a series of argumentative couplets in parallel statements based on anaphora ("If you do . . ." [256-62]) and concluded by an exhortation.

Rhyiming (essentially terminal) is present though not obtrusive with two identical rhymes "God's enemy" (253-54) and "attempt" (266, 267), a few more or less distant ones ("countrymen/gentlemen" at a seven line interval [238, 246]; "side/homicide" at a five line interval [241, 247];

22. Be that as it may, this echo, if it is not an illusion, suggests that the research for stylistic effects in literary analysis should not be limited to lexical repetition and imagery.
"sword/swords" [262, 265]) and the speech is capped by a defiant final couplet: "cheerfully/victory" (speech-end rhyme).

**Richard's oration: 5.3.315-42 (28 lines)**

It contains absolutely no rhyme whatever, surprisingly enough for the immediately preceding prologue addressed to a few gentlemen has a truly heroic ring, like a flourish of trumpets, with its final quatrain: "awe/ law/pell-mell/hell!" (311-14).

Perhaps, this absence of rhyme and the interruption of Richard's oration by the noise of battle are symbolic of chaos and disorder in his mind.

This being said, and more generally speaking, in the play's heroic passages Shakespeare is never really dependent on rhyme for his effects (except for the brief passage of 4.3.52-57). He seems to rely more on the choice of vocabulary, images and rhythm. A comparison of those two orations with King Henry V's even more heroic speech before Agincourt *(King Henry V 3.1.1-34)* or with *1 Henry VI* would confirm this.*23*

The same remark applies to poetic passages in the play, mostly songs of grief and mourning, including Clarence's dream*24* or his brother's lamentation on hearing of his death (2.1.103-34), a very moving and pathetic speech which makes the King so human.*25*

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23. See for instance, *1 Henry VI*, 4.3.20-21, 28-33, 37-46. But the extreme case concerns the Talbot scenes and their epilogue, where rhyme displaces blank verse for 144 lines (4.5.16 to 4.7.50). No such sustained use of rhymed verse is to be found in the other *Henry VI* history plays.

24. Clarence's nightmare: 1.4.2-7 (prologue), 9-33, 36-41, 43-63 and 66-74 (epilogue). A poetic climax but, contrary to tradition, rhyme is practically absent from the main speeches (the account of the nightmare itself, despite a promising prologue with a series of irregular consecutive rhymes: "day/night/sights (man)night/days" ("time" for assonance). The only true rhyme (apart from the spaced "Tower [9]/Gloucester [11]/ Lancaster [15]") is found in Clarence's concluding lament: "me/Thee" (68-69), where it places in ominous proximity the sinner and the divine Judge. This eclipse of rhyme in this particularly poetic passage points a stylistic choice: Clarence's dream is essentially visual and the evocation of Hell, with its classical and Dantesque reminiscences, relies mostly on images rather than sounds showing a clear influence of baroque art with the contrast between death, mortality, darkness and the bright jewels, symbol of the enduring, shining in lieu and place of the eyes in the dead men's skulls, a conceit which also recalls metaphysical poetry. Rhyme would have been, no doubt, an impediment for the thinking and visualising process.

25. On either side of a central triplet ("me/Tewkesbury/me" [111-13]) which emphasises the key word "me," reverberating throughout the series of rhetorical questions in the first part of the speech (107-16), we find the usual sprinkling of a few scattered rhymes,
Rhyme and stichomythia

Strictly speaking, stichomythia, expressing tension and conflict, is based on alternate single lines and verbal echoes. But at times, Shakespeare extends the stichomythic verbal parrying into a small speech, as if he were seeking to integrate the conventional device with ordinary dialogue and vary the form, shifting from the "keen encounter of . . . wits" to "a slower method" (1.2.119-20), as Richard himself advises in a statement which sounds programmatic.

Stichomythia, mostly based on random verbal repetition, is not normally end-rhymed, the device favouring rather the use of internal identical or derived rhymes. It is used in two cases:
- for long scenes (in particular the wooing scenes).
- or sporadically in brief exchanges.

In Richard III, stichomythia is used especially in the two wooing scenes.

1.2.68-116, then 138-54: Anne and Richard's stichomythic verbal contest (one of the longest) described by Richard as "the keen encounter of our wits" (119).

This first stichomythia is particularly elaborate, mixing distant or successive true and derived rhymes, either in single or shared speeches.
- "pity/angry" (71-74).
- the remarkable specular effect of 75-80, with "woman/leave/myself," echoed by Richard: "man/leave/self."
  - the shared couplet "thyself/myself" (84-85).
  - internal rhymes and lay on words: "accuse . . . excuse . . . excuse . . . excuse . . . excus'd" (80-86).

In lines 95 through 154, short and long replies alternate still relying on shared or distant rhymes ("effect" [154-55], "life/life" [134-35], "thee" [137, 139] and the three "husband" [141-43]).

The stichomythia is interrupted by Richard's long wooing speech to return at the end (196-206) in a new (and strict) form: no rhyming but brief and quick series of half-pentameters.

true or identical ("death" [103], "death/wrath" [106-07], "me" [113, 116], "life/life" [130-31]).
3.1.115-25: a short witty exchange between young York and Richard which perhaps sounds more like a verbal contest than strict stichomythia in which rhyme plays no part.

4.4.212-430: Richard's wooing of Elizabeth (the last stichomythia of the play).

The parallel with the first wooing scene has been noted by all critics, though the issue is different since Richard is in fact wooing the Queen for her daughter.

We note the same alternation between long dialogue and stichomythia. The latter structures the scene, appearing in the prologue, in the main plea and in the epilogue, and marking the various contrasting stages of this dramatic dialogue.

The prologue (212-19) displays a neat pattern of interlaced semantic, true and identical rhymes, producing a triplet and followed by a couplet of semantic rhymes: "opposite/contrary; destiny/destiny; death/life."

The middle passage (343-77) offers other variations: semantic rhymes: "alliance/war"; "entreats/forbids" (with phonological echo); "last/end"; "quick/dead" (with a pun); a derived rhyme ("told/tale") and two identical rhymes ("last . . . last," "it/it").

Moreover, it is marked at the end by an innovation: the stichomythia is broken by Elizabeth's interruptions as the Queen grows impatient and resists Richard's rhetoric.

The short epilogue (418-25) includes a quatrain of shared true rhymes: "myself/yourself," "children/them" (equivalence of the nasals).

To conclude on stichomythia: Richard III mixes strict and loose stichomythia, which suggests that Shakespeare was concerned with varying the device and integrating it more closely into conversation, an aspect of the development of his dramatic language.

At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, terminal rhyme (especially identical, derived and semantic) remains an important element in stichomythia.

A few other remarkable examples of patterning

2.2.72-85: a scene of lamentation (Elizabeth, children, Duchess).

A rather conventional use of rhyme to express the lyricism of grief in a series of three groups of shared identical rhymes ("Clarence/Clarence"; "gone/gone/gone"; "loss/loss/loss") with an effect of crescendo both on
the formal plane (one couplet followed by two triplets) and on the semantic ("Clarence . . . gone . . . loss"), sounding like antiphonal singing and the tolling of a bell.

The patterning is furthermore supported by anaphora, generating strictly parallel statements which go well beyond ordinary sympleoce and are reminiscent of Biblical laments (in particular, The Lamentations of Jeremiah, third and fifth elegies), prolonged in a lower key by the Duchess in 82-85 (with an irregular quatrain of alternate rhyme: "I/she/ I/they," or regular if "I" and "They" are considered as rhyming).

4.1.91-96: a farewell scene.

The Duchess's parting words to Dorset, Anne and Elizabeth, are delivered in very ritualistic form, combining a series of three successive sympleces: "Go thou . . . thee," concluded by two couplet rhymes ("thee/me" and "seen/teen").

4.4.166-75: The Duchess's vituperatio against her son, Richard.

It is almost entirely rhymed combining couplet and enclosed rhymes. The last quatrain is irregular, the middle rhyme ("hatred/name") resting on assonance: "well/hell; me/ infancy; furious/venturous; bloody, hatred, name, company."

The patterning is somewhat masked by the fact that most lines (except for the last two) form isolated semantic units.

4.4.184-96: The Duchess, again in a final curse on Richard.

The anathema, a ritualistic type of speech (and even a literary genre) generates a series of rhymes: distant echoes at the beginning ("ordinance . . . curse . . . wear'st") and a quatrain at the end with the assonance on "children" announcing the final rhyme: "children/enemies-victory/end/ attend."

 Altogether, the Duchess, Richard's mother, is the character who rhymes most consistently.

4.4.206-11: first part of Elizabeth's wooing where she beseeches Richard to spare her daughter: a very neat pattern with "beauty . . . infamy/slaughter/daughter" and the ensuing stichomythia develops another one with semantic rhymes and a triplet of true rhymes:

- opposite contrary destiny destiny death life (cousins/cozen'd)
- semantic rhyme identical semantic rhyme pun
The end of the same scene (4.4.378-83) proposes another pattern combining a quatrain of enclosed rhymes ("Him/made-died/Him") a pair of two interlocked distant rhymes: "made/Head and died/child."

It is followed by another carefully patterned speech (391-96) with another quatrain of alternate rhymes this time (slaughter'd/age /butcher'd/age) followed by a speech end true rhyme hast/o'erpast, the last word echoing the first word of the speech (lines 388 and 396).

Other patterns could, no doubt, be found, but exhaustive analysis would be trying for the reader.

Rhyme in Richard III, both in a narrow and a broad sense is probably more abundant than is usually acknowledged, which is not really surprising in a highly formal and rhetorical play.

Shakespeare used all types of rhyme and only a careful statistical analysis could decide which dominates (if any). However, the general impression is that identical and semantic rhymes play an important part in a play concerned with obsessive themes like death and identity (the self), the clash of persons (and names... so many Edwards and so many Richards), the reversal of values favouring the clash of words (identical or opposite).

Identical rhymes are particularly conspicuous in two very frequent stylistic devices: stichomythia and symploce, the first dramatic, the second, rhetoric, and both very ritualistic in keeping with the general tonality of the play.

Shakespeare does not seem to have followed any particular plan or fixed design in the use of rhyme in this play, which is both conventional and erratic. It does not seem to characterise particular roles or situations, except for the Duchess who rhymes abundantly. Otherwise, it is found in all types of discourses, with perhaps a slight preference for laments and farewell scenes, and it does occasionally concentrate in some places for special stylistic effects or in some short speeches which are almost entirely rhymed.

On the whole, rhyme runs throughout the play and its regular presence contributes to a certain uniformity of atmosphere and style, linking lyrical and dramatic passages, despite occasional contrasts in the quality of diction, and to the unity of the play.

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ANNEXE

Richard III: True rhymes

1.1.39-40: G/be (speech ending)
1.1.55-59: G/G/be/G/he: five framed by assonance "dreams" and "these"
1.1.64-65: she/extremity
1.1.75-77(8): delivery/deity/liberty (and possibly: way)
1.1.84-85: monarchy/me
1.1.88-89: Brakenbury/say
1.1.99-100: one/alone
1.1.107-08: probable rhyme: "King/in"
1.1.136-37: "liberty" then "melancholy/mightily" (with internal rhyme "sickly") and before, "liberty" (133)
1.1.140-41: person/upon (imperfect echo but allowed rhyming of stressed/unstressed)
1.1.147-48: Clarence/arguments (prolonged by "intent")
1.1.153-54: daughter/father (then "father" at 156)
1.1.161-62: reigns/gains
1.2.183-84: Henry/me (preceded by "knee" and spaced rhyme: "thee knee," 180,182)
1.2.237-38: eyes/by
1.2.244-45: prince/since
1.2.264-65: glass/pass (scene-ending) and perhaps
1.2.265-66: grave/love
1.3.49-50: courtesy/enemy (before: "lightly" [45])
1.3.66-67: itself/myself
1.3.144-46: is/days/enemies (shared)
1.3.267-68: death/wrath (also see 2.1.106-07)
1.4.41-42: sea/agony
1.4.68-69: me/Thee (creature and his God)
1.4.82-83: name/fame (speech-ending)
1.4. 272-73: away/stay (act ending)
2.1.48-50: day/charity (preceded by "day" and supported by internal rhymes: "Happy," "enmity")
2.2.104-05: mercy/knee (and duty, 108)
2.2.142-43: Ludlow/go
2.4.14-15: fast/haste
3.1.3-6: melancholy/way/heavy/me

3.1.72-73: reported/built it
3.1.77-78: posterity/day
3.1.93-94: king/spring (shared)
3.1.181-82: Catesby/adversaries
3.2.23-24: intelligence-instance
3.2.32-33: kindly/say (shared)
3.4.106-07: head/dead
3.5.52-53: end/friends
3.5.68-69: intent/intend (derived)
3.5.74-75: children/citizen
3.7.1, 4: citizens/children
3.7.2-3: Lord/word
3.7.13-14: apology/me (surrounded by assonances)
3.7.145-46: sovereignty/me (prolonged by "me" [148])
3.7.187-88: degree/bigamy
3.7.203-04: me/majesty (speech opening)
3.7.220-21: suit/rue it (composed rhyme)
3.7.245-46: again/friends (dubious but act ending makes it probable)
4.1.2-3: Gloucester/Tower (shared)
4.1.6-7: day/away (shared)
4.1.10-11: there/together (shared)
4.1.24-25: done/son
4.1.50-51: way/delay (leave-taking formula)
4.1.67-68: hands/husband) (coming close to rhyme "words/curse"
[4.1.79-80])
4.1.102-03: well/farewell
4.2.63-64: in/sin
4.3.52-57: three couplets: delay/beggary/wing/king/shield/field
4.4.15-16: right/night
4.4.20-21: Plantagenet/debt
4.4.35-38: reverend/seigniory/hand/society (opening speech quatrain)
4.4.68-69: play/Grey
4.4.73-74: hand/end (but see consecutive rhymes)
4.4.103-40: one/none
4.4.114-15: mischance/France
4.4.128-31: joys/miseries/impart/heart (the first rhyme being also a semantic one)
4.4.163-64: thee/agony (plus internal rhyme with "hasty," as in
1.1.136)
4.4.166-67: well/hell (but see consecutive)
4.4.193-96: enemies/victory/end/attend
4.4.210-11: slaughter/daughter (preceded by "beauty/infamy" [207-09])
4.4.231-32: boys/eyes
4.4.395-96: hast/o'erpast: speech ending (but see the whole speech)
4.4.416-17: times/designs
5.1.28-29: shame/blame
5.2.3-4: land/impediment (prolonged by encouragement at line 6)
5.2.23-24: wings/kings (scene-ending)
5.3.17-18: delay/day
5.3.76-77: ready/me (shared)
5.3.150-51: awake/sake (Ghost of Hastings to Richmond)
5.3.156-57: annoy/joy
5.3.166-67: victory/thee (Ghost of Anne) and before: "thee...me" and assonance on "sleep"
5.3.172-77: death/breath; aid/dismay'd; side/pride
5.3.270-71: cheerfully/victory
5.3.283-84: today/army
5.3.305-06: bold/sold
5.3.311-14: a series of four: awe/law; pell-mell/hell!
5.5.3-4: thee/royalty
5.5.38-41: increase/peace; again/Amen (a quatrain closing the play)

Spaced rhymes

At one line interval
1.1.129, 131: to/you (prolonged by "mew'd," 132); 1.2.92, 94: hand/husband (stichomythic exchange); 1.2.171, 173: enemy/fee, then 180,83: thee/knee; 1.3.12, 14: Gloucester/Protector; 1.3.30, 32, 34: Derby/Majesty/cheerfully; 1.3.216, 217: me/thee; 1.4.8, 10: me/Burgundy; 2.4.17, 19: thee/leisurely; 2.4.22, 24: doubt/flout; 3.1.3, 5: melancholy/heavy; 3.2.79, 82: secure/sure; 3.7.110, 112: offence/ignorance; 3.7.195, 197: dignity/ancestry; 3.7.232, 234: me/see; 4.1.29, 31: mother/Westminster; 4.3.41, 43: daughter/wooer; 4.4.207, 209: beauty/infamy; 4.4.248-50: mine/thine (shared); 4.4.260, 263: brothet/daughter (if the "s" does not destroy rhyme); 5.3.262, 265: sword/swords; 53.281, 284, 286: somebody, army, me; 5.4.6, 8: withal/all.

More than two lines up to four
1.1.77, 80, 83: liberty/livery/monarchy; 1.2.71-74: pity/angry; 1.2.251-54: me/moiety; 1.3.85-8: Majesty/injury; 1.3.335, 338: evil/devil; 4.3.10, 13: another/other; 4.4.48, 51: death/earth; 4.4.242, 245: lady/
glory; 4.4.298, 300: daughter/mother; 4.4.301, 304: below/sorrow; 4.4.424, 427: breed/deed; 5.3.324, 327: fellow/snow.

Internal rhymes (leonine pattern; all types of rhyme except for semantic ones)

1.1.3: clouds/House; 1.1.19: feature/Nature; 1.1.39: prophecy/G; 1.1.70: safe; 1.1.87: "soever/brother"; 1.1.115: you; 1.1.136: sickly/melancholy; 1.2.173: beauty/fee; 1.2.184: beauty/me; 1.3.62: Gloucester/matter; 1.3.180: thee; 1.3.192: death: 1.3.202: queen; 1.3.216: thee/me; 1.3.274: charity/me; 1.3.290: bites; 1.3.292: him; 1.3.306: her/mother; 1.4.245 ("deed"); 2.4.13: grace/apace; 2.4.34: she/me; 3.1.10: show/ Knows; 3.1.79: young/long; 3.1.138: mother/her; 3.1.185: Shore/more; 3.4.30: well; 3.4.79: me; 3.5.110: begin/again (probably more than an eye rhyme); 3.7.165: need; 4.4.163: hasty/thee; 4.4.197: cause/curse (pararhyme); 4.4.541: suddenly/Salisbury; 4.4.501: Exeter/(elder) brother; 5.1.22: earnest/jest; 5.3.115: Thee/victory; 5.3.189: myself (and again 204); 5.3.197: perjury/degree; 5.3.223: mean/me (reverse rhyme); 5.4.7: horse (and 13); 5.5.7: it.

Semantic rhymes: the music of ideas

1.2.45-46: Devil/hell; 1.3.289-90: Dog/bites; 1.3.335-36: Evil/ villainy; 1.4.22-23: My eyes/my ears; 1.4.74-75: sleep/rest (shared); 2.1.9-10: Hatred/love, then hate/love 32-33; 2.1.15-16: Love/heart; 2.1.29-30: league/allies; 2.2.25-26: Father/child; 2.2.40-41: Is dead/is gone; 2.2.60-61: moan/cries, woes/cries, followed by death/tears(62-63), then by unmoan'd/unwept (64-65, plus consonantal rhyming) and lamentation/complaints (66-67); 2.3.22-23: Mother/father; 3.1.28-29: Prince/Grace; 3.2.90-91: Heads/hats; 3.4.3-4: Day/time; 3.4.96-97: Men/god; 3.5.45-46: Execution/death; 3.5.79-80: Luxury/lust; 3.7.75-76: Body/soul; 3.7.150-51: the first/the last; 3.7.168-69: Majesty/reign; 3.7.214-16: King/throne/House; 4.4.216-17: opposite/contrary and 4.4.219-21: Destiny/Death/life; 4.4.294-95: Sons/daughter; 4.4.303-08: Groans/sorrow, Youth/age, King/Queen; 4.4.361-62: Quick/dead (with a pun) plus "graves," 363; 4.4.433-34: Coast/shores; 4.4.484-85: North/west; 5.1.5-6: Peace/war.

27. See Lear 1.4.238-39; Romeo and Juliet 4.5.77-78.